

Creating a Successful Single Service Point for Circulation and Reference in an Academic Library

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Topics to Cover

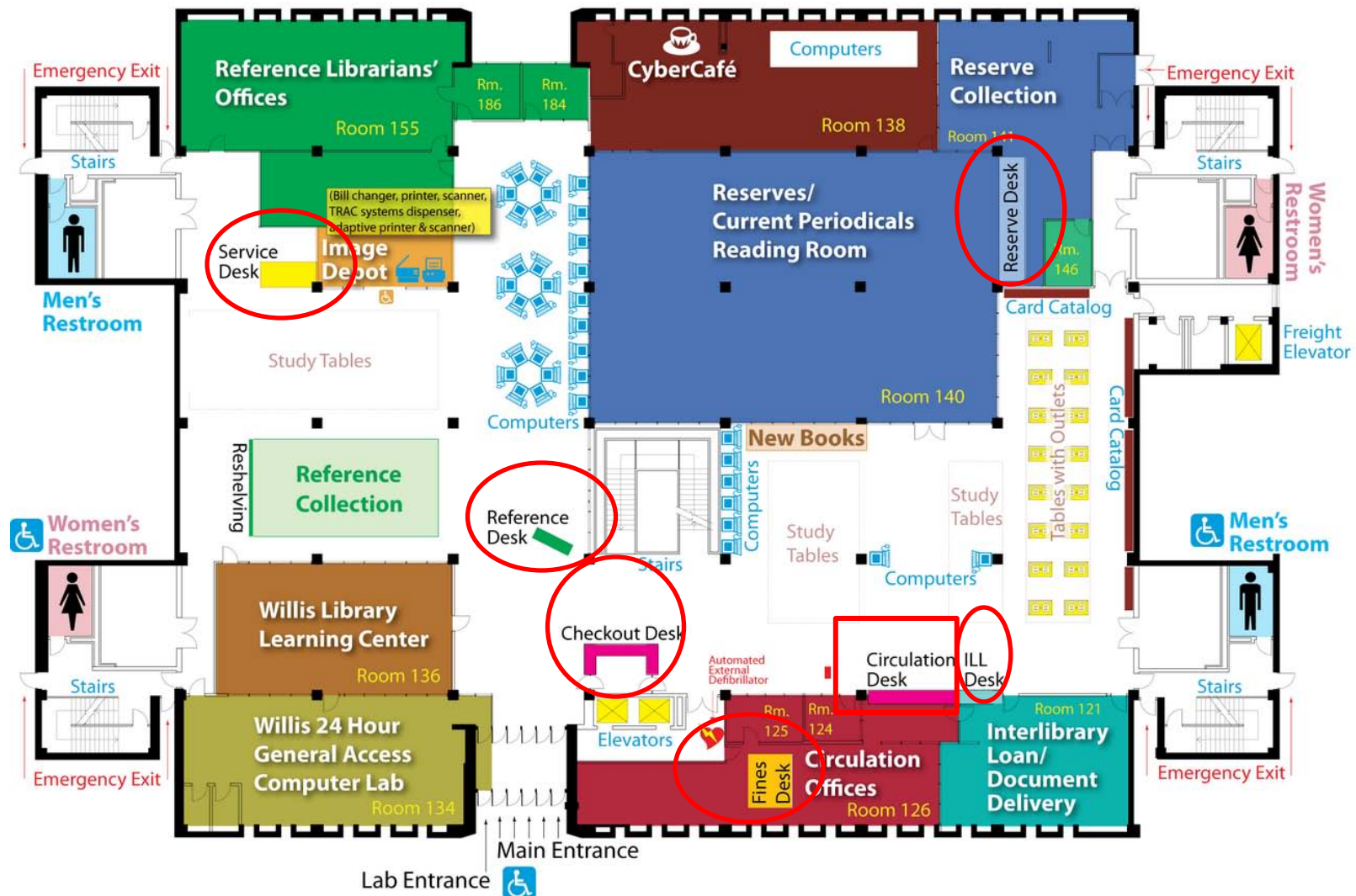
- Background
- Planning
- Implementation
- Marketing
- Assessment
- External and internal benefits
- What's next

Let's Go Back in Time...



Spring 2011

Welcome to Willis Library First Floor



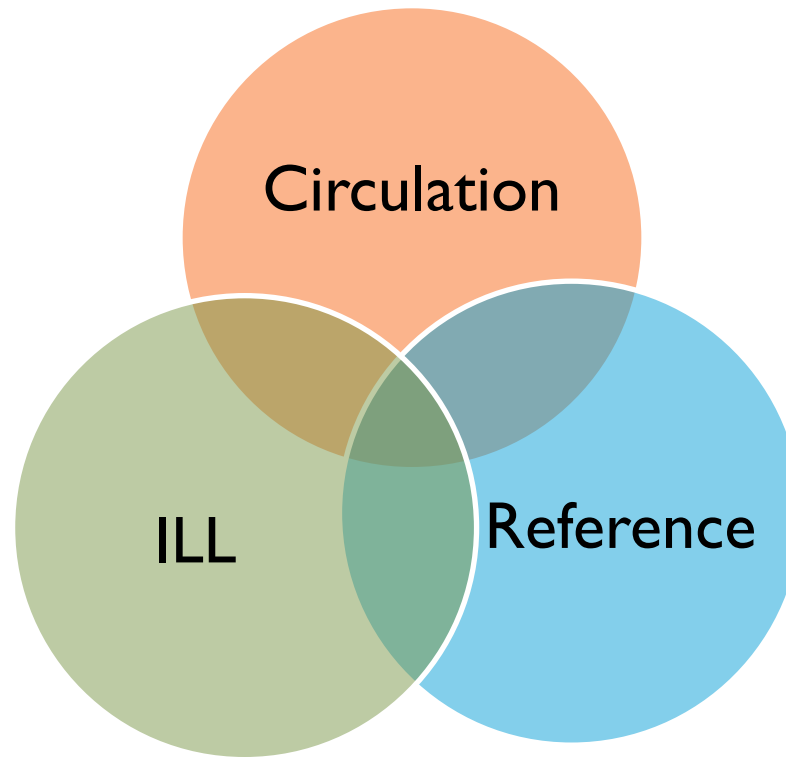
Multiple Service Desk Issues

- Confusion for patrons
- Patrons sent from desk to desk for assistance
- Staffing costs
- Communication and management issues
- Missed opportunities
- More students: 36,000

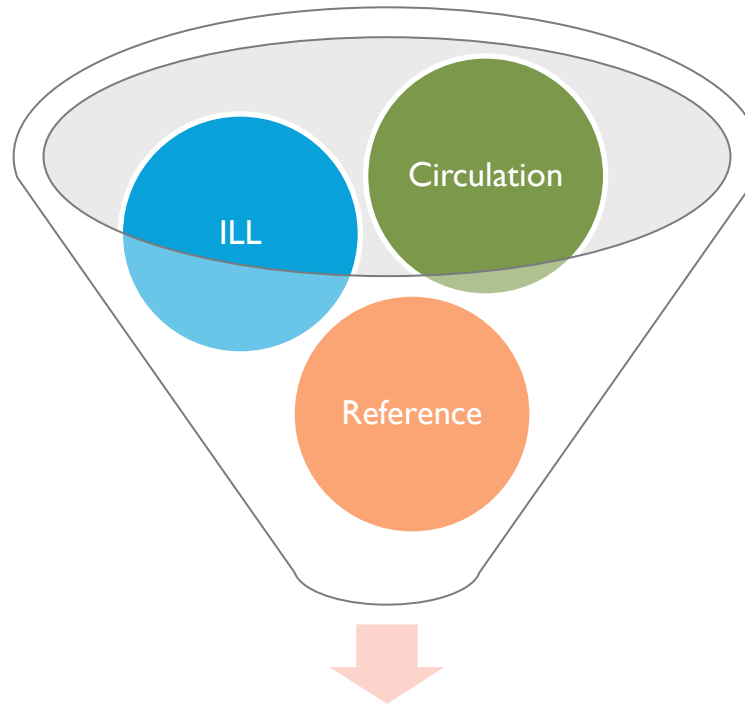


Circulation, ILL and Reference in Spring 2011

- Three separate departments



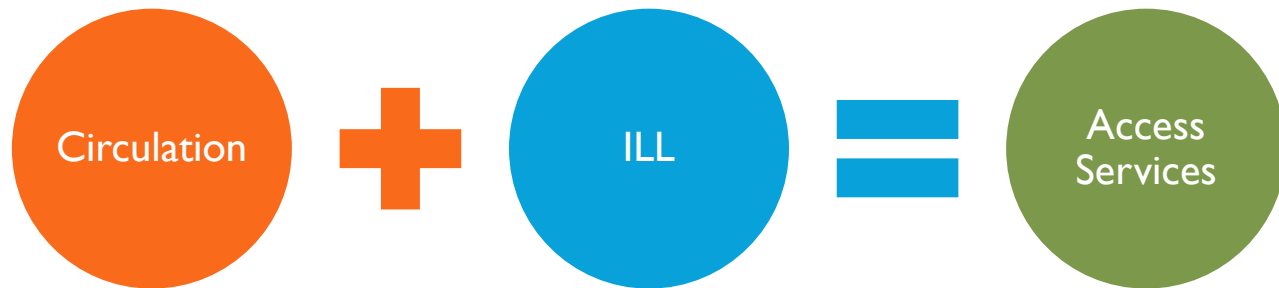
Circulation, ILL and Reference in Summer 2011



Public Services = Better
Communication

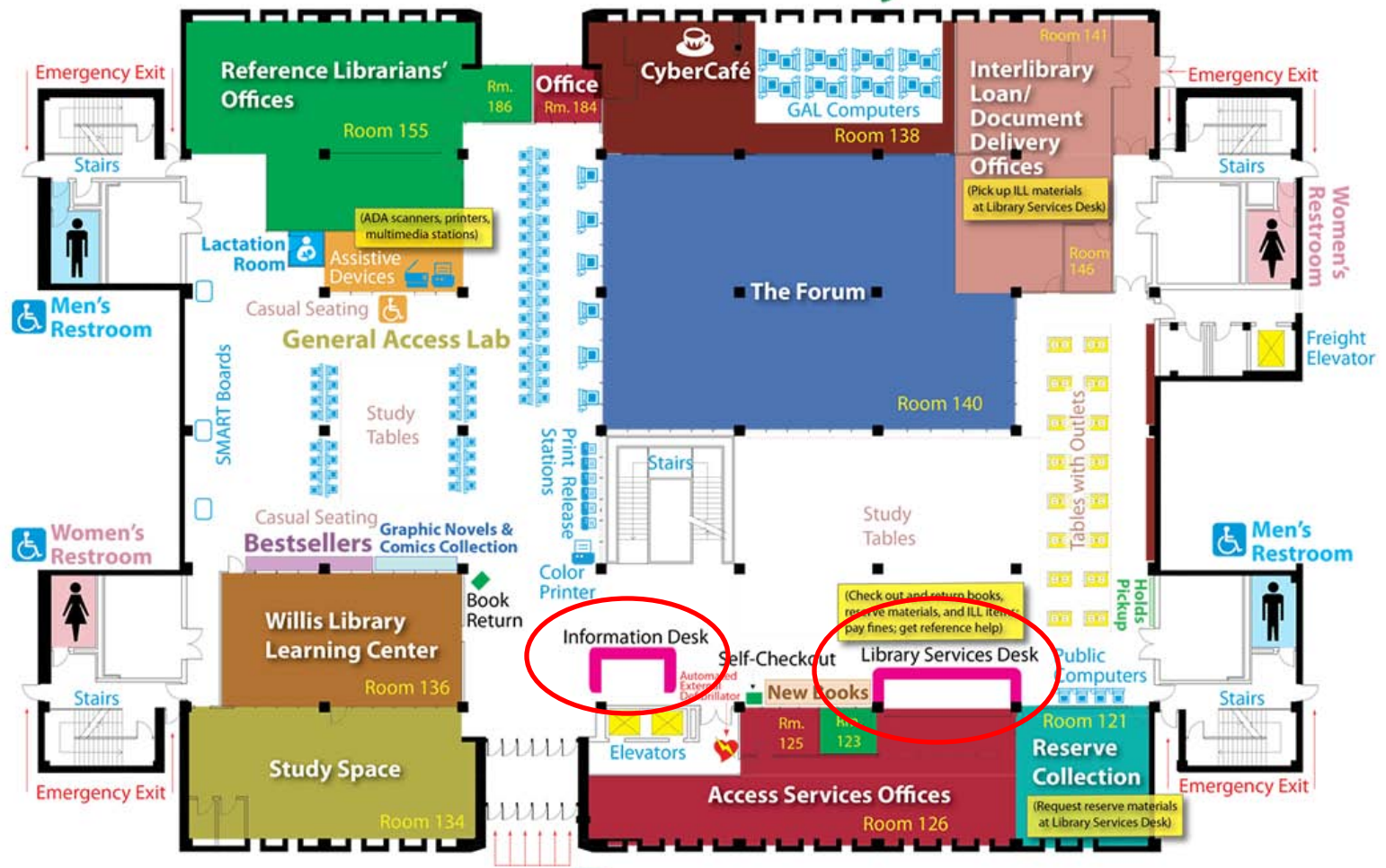
Circulation and ILL in Fall 2011

- Creation of the Access Services Department



Summer 2012

Welcome to Willis Library First Floor



The Combined Service Desk



Main problem with existing desk



Planning

- Goals
- Naming the Desk
- Services
- Staff Concerns
- Staffing
- Training
- Hours of Operation



Goals for Creating a Combined Service Desk

- One single service point for checkout, paying fines, reference assistance, ILL
- Increased cross training opportunities for staff
- Cost savings on student assistant expenditures
- Circulation and ILL staff members have more time for projects related to improving services, workflow efficiencies
- Reference librarians have more time for liaison work and academic research projects
- Increased communication avenues for Reference and Circulation



Possible Names for the Service Desk

- Ask Us Desk
- Patron Services Desk
- Patron Assistance Desk

- Library Services Desk





Services to Offer

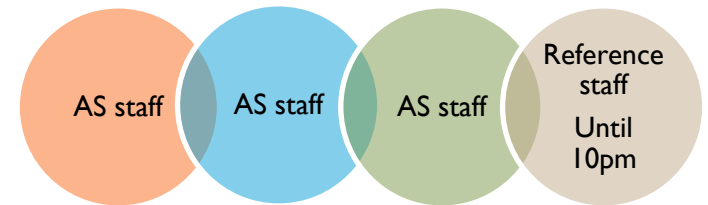
- Checkout
- Reserves
- Fines
- Library Cards
- Graduate Carrels
- ILL
- Reference

Staff Concerns

- Reference
 - Quality of reference services
 - How much Circulation training will we need
 - Will there be an on-call service
 - We will need to work closely with Circulation
- Access Services
 - Quality of circulation services
 - How much Reference training will we need
 - Will there be a reference person at all hours the desk is open
 - We will need to work closely with Reference



Staffing the Desk



- Four seats at the service desk
- Full time staff(10) and student assistants (11) =AS desk staff
- Graduate students (6) and two librarians (2) = Reference desk staff
- Desk schedules set by the semester
- On-call librarian service using walkie talkies
- Office next to the desk available for in depth reference
- Bell when additional AS assistance is needed
- Cross trained shelvers

Training

- Basic training checklists
- Defining skill sets
- Access Services staff: basic reference training
- Reference staff: basic circulation training

Training

developing the skills, experience, and
employees need to perform
improve their performance
skills, and abilities, specific

Reference training for AS Staff

- Catalog searching tips
 - Keyword vs. Subject searching
- How to use electronic databases
- How to search UNT Digital Collections
- How to find subject and class page LibGuides
- Who are the Liaison Librarians
 - How to find a liaison librarian (guide)
 - Reference by appointment
- How to use on-call reference assistance
- RefStats

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the UNT library catalog with tabs for Books & Media, Online Articles, Databases, e-Journals, UNT Digital Collections, and Subject Guides. Below the tabs is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search for Books, Journals, Films, Music & More" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar is a link "What resource does this search?". Below the search bar are two dropdown menus: "Keyword" and "All Collections". To the right of these dropdowns are two links: "Go to the Catalog" and "Advanced Search". At the bottom of the search interface is a section titled "More Catalog Options:" with links to "Find Course Reserves", "Find Music", "Find Media", and "Find E-Books".

Books & Media Online Articles Databases e-Journals UNT Digital Collections Subject Guides

What resource does this search?

Search for Books, Journals, Films, Music & More Search

Keyword All Collections

Go to the Catalog
Advanced Search

More Catalog Options: Find Course Reserves | Find Music | Find Media | Find E-Books

Access Services Training for Reference Staff

- Circulation policies and procedures
 - Sierra training
 - Checking out books/reserves
- ILL policies and procedures
 - ILLiad training
 - Checking out ILL materials
- Ref Stats Circulation training

Reference Statistics : Add Question

[Add Question](#) | [Reports](#) | [Statistics](#)

Quick Search:

Department	<input type="text" value="Circ"/>	Question:	<input type="text"/>
Location	<input type="text" value="General"/>		
Patron Type	<input type="text" value="Student"/>		
Question Type	<input type="text" value="Reference"/>	Answer:	<input type="text"/>
Time Spent	<input type="text" value="0-5"/>		
Question Format	<input type="text" value="Walk up"/>		
Back Date	<input type="text"/>		
Staff Member	<input type="text" value="mav0025"/>	Auto-Format	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hours of Operation

- **Library Services Desk**
 - Sunday: 1p-midnight
 - Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
 - Friday: 9a-6pm
 - Saturday: closed
- **Reference Staffing**
 - Sunday-Thursday: until 10pm
 - Friday: until 6pm
- **Willis Library**
 - Open 24/7
 - Self Checkout Machine



Implementation

- Set up three training sessions for Reference and Access Services staff
- Worked with Library Facilities to eliminate other service desks
- Began combined service desk in summer
- Reallocated student assistants
- Continued meeting with department managers
- Requested ongoing feedback from staff



Marketing

- Began marketing campaign in Fall 2012
 - Library's website
 - Signage on the first floor
 - Student Government Association
 - Graduate Student Council
 - Faculty Senate
 - Library Liaisons
 - Library's Facebook page



In House Assessment

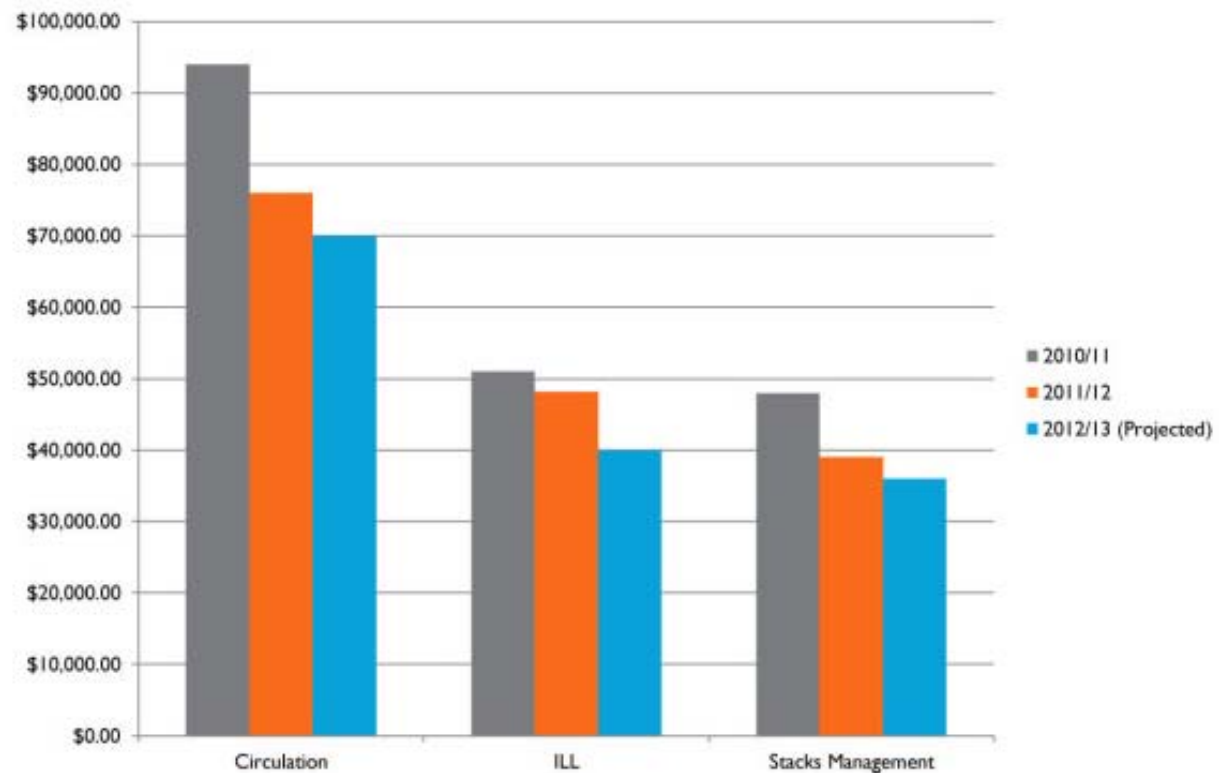
- Department meetings with Reference and Access Services staff members
- Surveyed student assistants from both departments
- Fall 2012 first semester week
 - 1867 patrons at the service desk



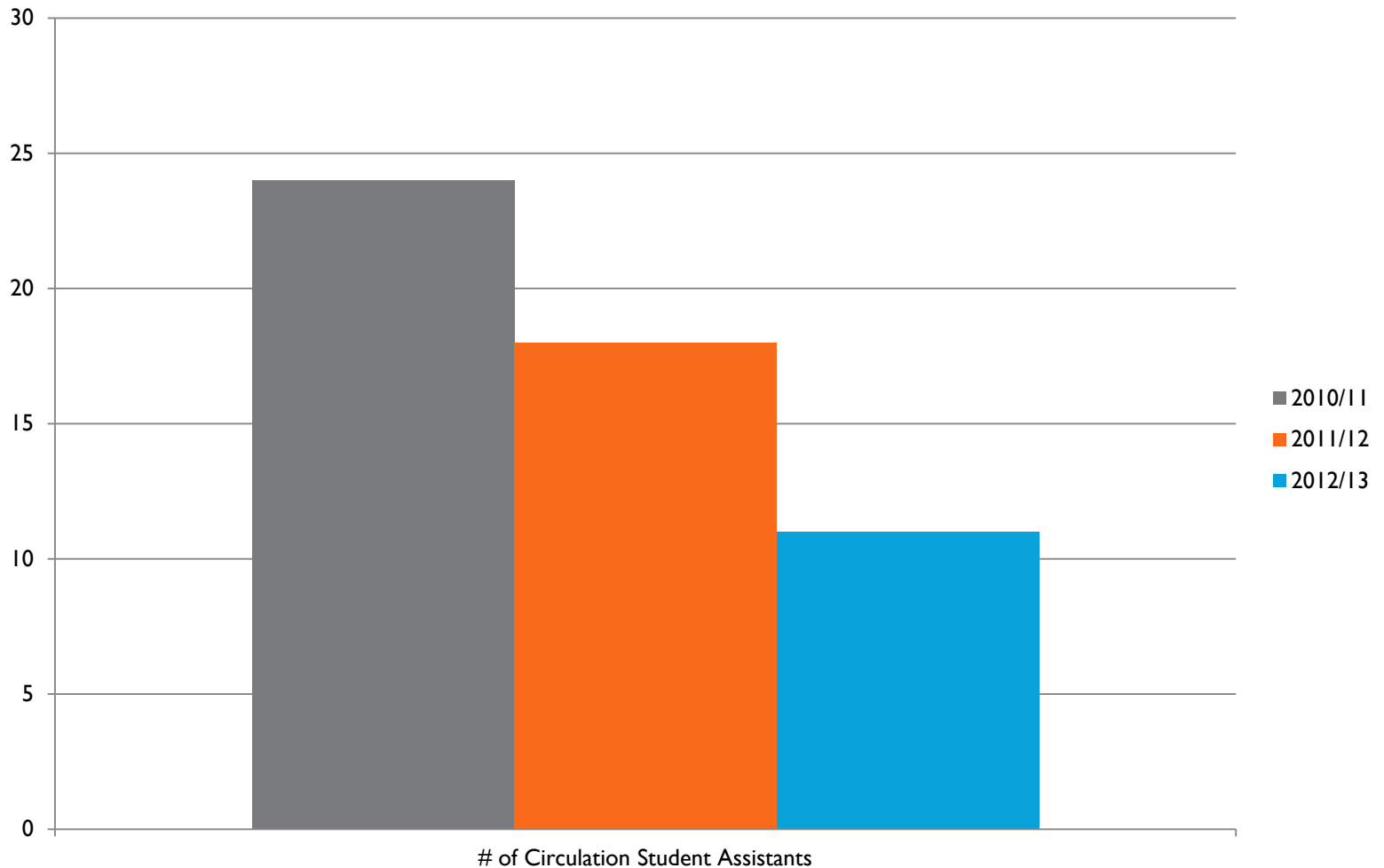
ASSESSMENT

Cost Savings

Cost Savings-Student Assistant Expenditures



Number of Student Assistants



What has been working?

- Reference and AS staff learning from each other as they help patrons at the desk
- Proximity of reference staff enables reference questions to be answered more quickly
- Easy to call for assistance
- Expanded training for student assistants has freed up full time staff
- Good communication between managers and staff
- Patrons like the single service point



Benefits-Internal

- Easier to help patrons
- Frequent communication between departments
- Better appreciation of what each department does
- Better trained staff, on the job mentoring
- Positive and welcoming service desk environment for staff
- Desk coverage is better



Benefits-Internal cont'd

- Student assistant expenditures reduced
- Librarians have more time to devote to faculty and students
- Access Services staff able to streamline and evaluate services since they are not tied to the desk
- More student assistants interested in library science



Benefits-External

- Public Services are more cohesive
- Better service for patrons
- Positive and welcoming service desk environment for patrons
- More embedded librarians in classrooms and buildings
- More library instruction courses
- More services: faculty delivery, expanded document delivery, online holds, food for fines



Improvements we needed to make

- Needed a dual monitor at the reference computer
- Develop a core competencies training list
- Have on-call librarians stop by the desk at beginning of their shifts
- Needed a new desk

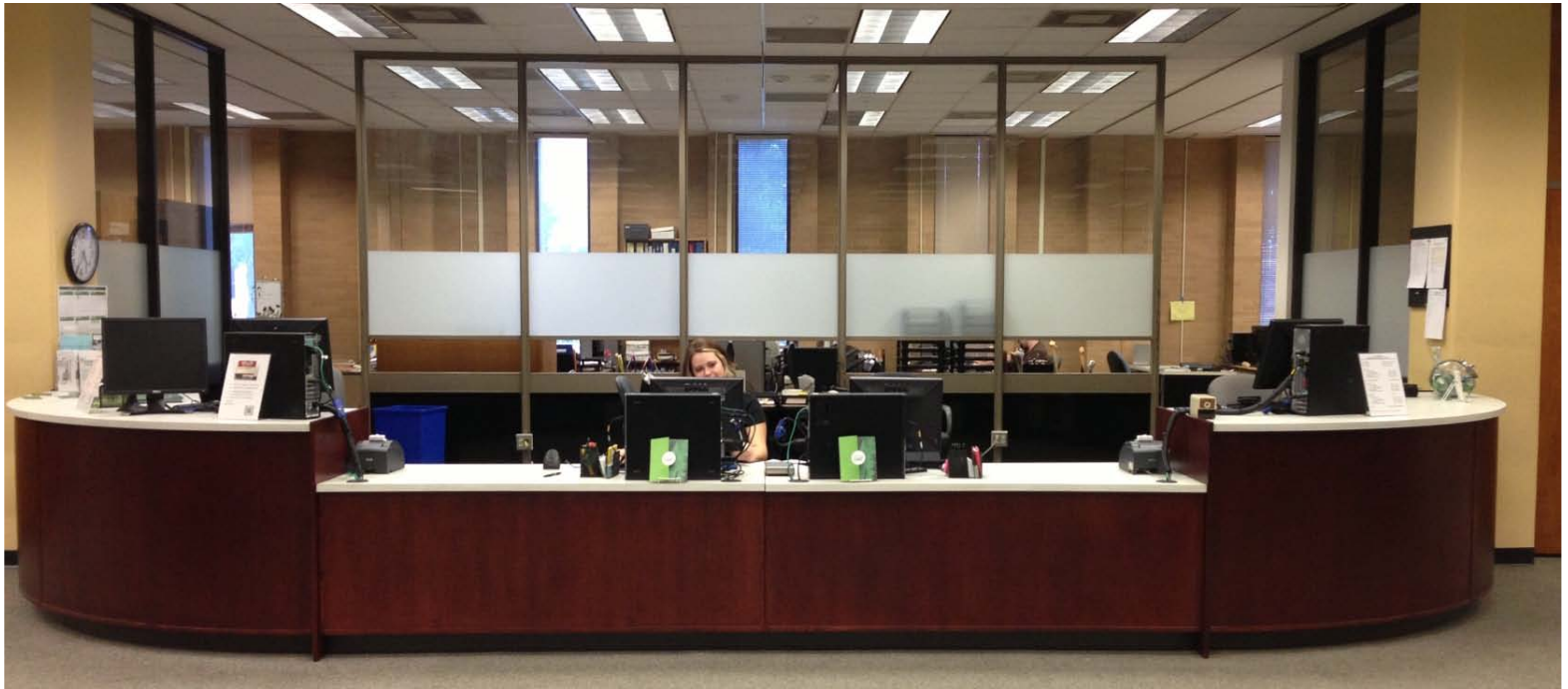


Problem with existing desk



Library Services Desk

June 2012



Now patrons can see the desk!



Where do we go from here?

- More cross training
- More assessment from patrons
- Create new services



Questions?

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